

Proposal for a

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

**amending Regulation (EU) 2016/399 as regards the reinforcement of checks against relevant
databases at external borders**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 77(2)(b) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure,

Whereas:

- (1) Control at external borders remains one of the main safeguards of the area without controls at internal borders and it significantly contributes to guaranteeing the long-term security of the Union and the citizens. It is carried out in the interest of all Member States. One of the purposes of such control is to prevent any threat to the Member States' internal security and public policy, irrespective of the origin of such threat, including where such a threat derives from Union citizens.
- (2) Minimum checks based on a rapid and straightforward verification of the validity of the travel document for crossing the border, are currently the rule for persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law.

The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, many of whom are Union citizens demonstrates the necessity to strengthen the checks at external borders with regard to [...] persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law.

- (3) The documents of persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law should therefore be checked systematically on entry into and on exit from the territory of Member States against relevant databases related to stolen, misappropriated, lost and invalidated travel documents in order to avoid that persons hide their real identity.
- (3a) Member States are obliged to check systematically third country nationals against all databases on entry. It should be ensured that such checks are also carried out systematically on exit.
- (4) Border guards should for the same reason also systematically check persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law against [...] the Schengen Information System and other relevant Union databases [...]. This is without prejudice to the consultation of national and Interpol databases.
- (4a) To that end, the Member States should ensure that their border guards have access at external border crossing points to the relevant national and European databases, including the Schengen Information System (SIS) and Interpol's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database (SLTD) in order to ensure full implementation of these provisions.
- (4b) These new systematic checks should be carried out in full compliance with relevant Union law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in accordance with Article 4 Schengen Borders Code and should fully respect human dignity, in accordance with Article 7 Schengen Borders Code.
- (4c) In accordance with Article 15 Schengen Borders Code, the Member States should deploy appropriate staff and resources in sufficient numbers to carry out systematic checks to prevent that these checks would cause disproportionate waiting times and hinder the flow of traffic at the external borders.

- (4d) The obligation of systematic checks on entry and on exit applies to the external borders of the Member States. It also applies, both on entry and on exit, to the internal borders of the Member States for which the verification in accordance with the applicable Schengen evaluation procedures has already been successfully completed, but for which the decision on the lifting of controls on their internal borders pursuant to relevant provisions of relevant Acts of Accession has not yet been taken. In order to avoid that the persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law are subject to those checks twice when crossing the internal borders of those Member States by land, on exit they may be subject to those checks only on a non-systematic basis, based on a risk assessment.
- (5) Technological developments allow for, in principle, the consultation of relevant databases [...] with a limited effect on the duration of crossing the border, as the checks on documents and persons can be carried out in parallel. Automatic border control gates may be relevant in that context. The use of passenger information received in accordance with Council Directive 2004/82/EC¹, or in accordance with other Union or national legislation, may also contribute to speeding up the process of required checks during the border crossing process.

It is therefore possible without disproportionate negative effect on persons travelling in good faith, to strengthen checks at external borders to better identify those persons who intend to hide their real identity or who are subject to relevant alerts for security reasons or for arrest. Systematic checks should be carried out at all external borders.

¹ Council Directive 2004/82/EC of 29 April 2004 on the obligation of carriers to communicate passenger data (OJ L 261, 6.8.2004, p.24)

(5a) However, if the carrying out of systematic checks against databases at [...] borders were to have a disproportionate impact on the flow of traffic at the border, Member States should be allowed not to carry out those systematic checks where, based on a risk assessment, it is assessed that such a relaxation would not lead to a security risk. Such risk assessment should be transmitted to the [...] European Border and Coast Guard Agency established by [...] Regulation [...] (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and the Council² and be the subject of regular reporting both to the Commission and to the Agency. This derogation should, however, only apply for a limited transitional period to air borders.

At the border crossing points benefiting from such derogations, at least the identity of persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law must be established on the basis of the production or presentation of an authentic travel document which is valid for crossing the border.

For this purpose those persons should be in particular subject to a rapid and straightforward verification of the validity of the travel document for crossing the border, and of the presence of signs of falsification or counterfeiting, where appropriate by using technical devices, and in case of doubts about the travel document and/or where there are indications that such a person may represent a threat to public policy, internal security or public health of the Member States, the border guard should consult all relevant databases in accordance with this Regulation.

² [...] Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2016 on the European Border and Coast Guard and amending Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EC) No 863/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 and Council Decision 2005/267/EC (OJ L 251, 16.9.2016, p.1)

- (5b) Where a Member State intends to carry out checks against relevant databases on a targeted basis regarding persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law, it should notify without delay the other Member States, the Agency and the Commission. A procedure for this notification should be developed by the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, in the context of the Schengen Borders Code Handbook.
- (6) With Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004³, the Union introduced the facial image and fingerprints as security elements in the passport of Union citizens. These security features have been introduced in order to render the passports more secure and establish a reliable link between the holder and the passport. Member States should therefore verify at least one of these biometric identifiers, in case of doubts on the authenticity of the [...] travel document for crossing the border, or on the identity of its holder. The same approach should apply to checks on third-country nationals, where this is possible.
- (6a) In order to facilitate the systematic checks against databases, Member States should phase out travel documents without machine readable zone.
- (7) This Regulation is without prejudice to the application of Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁴.
- (7a) Member States should also, in their own interest and in the interests of other Member States, enter data into the European databases. Equally, they should ensure that the data are accurate and up-to-date and obtained and entered lawfully.
- (8) [...] (mentioned in recital (3a)).

³ Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 of 13 December 2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States (OJ L 385, 29.12.2004, p.1).

⁴ Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States (OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 77).

- (9) Since the objective of this Regulation, namely reinforcing the checks against databases at external borders in reply in particular to the increase of the terrorist threat concerns one of the safeguards of the area without internal border control and as such concerns the proper functioning of the Schengen area, it cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States individually, but can rather be better achieved at Union level, the Union may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Regulation does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve that objective.
- (10) In accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of the Protocol No 22 on the position of Denmark, as annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Denmark is not taking part in the adoption of this Regulation and is not bound by it or subject to its application. Given that this Regulation builds upon the Schengen *acquis*, Denmark shall, in accordance with Article 4 of that Protocol, decide within a period of six months after the Council has decided on this Regulation whether it will implement it in its national law.
- (11) This Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis*, in which the United Kingdom does not take part, in accordance with Council Decision 2000/365/EC⁵; the United Kingdom is therefore not taking part in the adoption of this Regulation and is not bound by it or subject to its application.

⁵ Council Decision 2000/365/EC of 29 May 2000 concerning the request of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 131, 1.6.2000, p. 43).

- (12) This Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis*, in which Ireland does not take part, in accordance with Council Decision 2002/192/EC⁶; Ireland is therefore not taking part in the adoption of this Regulation and is not bound by it or subject to its application.
- (13) As regards Iceland and Norway, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Agreement concluded by the Council of the European Union and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the latter's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*⁷, which fall within the area referred to in point A of Article 1 of Council Decision 1999/437/EC⁸.
- (14) As regards Switzerland, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*⁹ which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point A of Decision 1999/437/EC read in conjunction with Article 3 of Council Decision 2008/146/EC¹⁰.

⁶ Council Decision 2002/192/EC of 28 February 2002 concerning Ireland's request to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 64, 7.3.2002, p. 20).

⁷ OJ L 176, 10.07.1999, p.36

⁸ Council Decision 1999/437/EC of 17 May 1999 on certain arrangements for the application of the Agreement concluded by the Council of the European Union and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the association of those two States with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 176, 10.07.1999, p.31).

⁹ OJ L 53, 27.2.2008, p. 52

¹⁰ Council Decision 2008/146/EC of 28 January 2008 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 53, 27.2.2008, p. 1).

- (15) As regards Liechtenstein, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Protocol between the European Union, the European Community, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein on the accession of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*¹¹ which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point A of Decision 1999/437/EC read in conjunction with Article 3 of Council Decision 2011/350/EU¹².
- (16) As far as the use of Schengen Information System is concerned, this Regulation constitutes an act building upon, or otherwise relating to, the Schengen *acquis* within, respectively, the meaning of Article 3(2) of the 2003 Act of Accession, Article 4(2) of the 2005 Act of Accession and Article 4(2) of the 2011 Act of Accession. The results of queries in the Schengen Information System should be without prejudice to Article 1(4) of Council Decision 2010/365/EU¹³.
- (17) This Regulation respects fundamental rights and observes the principles recognised in particular by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- (18) Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹⁴ should therefore be amended accordingly,

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¹¹ OJ L 160, 18.6.2011, p. 21.

¹² Council Decision 2011/350/EU of 7 March 2011 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol between the European Union, the European Community, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein on the accession of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*, relating to the abolition of checks at internal borders and movement of persons (OJ L 160, 18.6.2011, p. 19).

¹³ Council Decision 2010/365/EU of 29 June 2010 on the application of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* relating to the Schengen Information System in the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania (OJ L 166, 1.7.2010, p.17)

¹⁴ Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code) (codification) (OJ L 77, 23.3.2016, p.1)

Article 1

Regulation (EU) 2016/399 is amended as follows:

(1) Article 8 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

"(2) On entry and on exit, persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law shall be subject to the following checks:

(a) verification of the identity and the nationality of the person, and the authenticity and validity of the travel document for crossing the border, including by consulting the relevant databases, in particular:

- (1) the Schengen Information System;
- (2) the Interpol database on stolen and lost travel documents;
- (3) national databases containing information on stolen, misappropriated, lost and invalidated travel documents.

For passports and travel documents containing a storage medium as referred to in Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004*, the authenticity of the chip data shall be checked.

* Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 of 13 December 2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States (OJ L 385, 29.12.2004, p. 1).

(b) verification that a person enjoying the right of free movement under Union law is not considered to be a threat to the internal security, public policy, international relations of any of the Member States or to public health, including by consulting the [...] Schengen Information System and other relevant Union [...] databases. [...] This is without prejudice to the consultation of national and Interpol databases.¹⁵

Where there is doubt on the authenticity of the travel document or on the identity of its holder, [...] verification of at least one of the biometric identifiers integrated in the passports and travel documents issued in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004*. Where possible, such verification shall also be carried out regarding travel documents not covered by that Regulation.

2a. Where [...] the checks against the databases referred to in [...] paragraph 2(a) and (b) [...] would have a disproportionate impact on the flow of traffic, a Member State may decide to carry out those checks[...] on a targeted basis at specified border crossing-points, based on an assessment of the risks related to internal security, public policy, international relations of any of the Member States or a threat to public health.

The scope and duration of the temporary reduction to targeted checks against the databases shall not exceed what is strictly necessary and shall be defined in accordance with a risk assessment established by the Member State concerned. The risk assessment shall explain the reasons for the temporary reduction to targeted checks against the databases and shall take into account, inter alia, the disproportionate impact on the flow of traffic and assess the possible risks and shall provide for statistics on passengers and incidents related to cross border crime. It shall be updated regularly.

¹⁵ The corresponding provision in Art. 8(3) (a) (i), (ii) and (vi), and (g)(i) and (iii) has been aligned accordingly.

* Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 of 13 December 2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States (OJ L 385, 29.12.2004, p. 1).

Persons who in principle are not subject to targeted checks against the databases, shall be at least subject to a check with a view to establishing their identity on the basis of the production or presentation of travel documents. Such a check shall consist in particular of a rapid and straightforward verification of the validity of the travel document for crossing the border, and of the presence of signs of falsification or counterfeiting, where appropriate by using technical devices and in case of doubts about the travel document and/or where there are indications that such a person may represent a threat to public policy, internal security or public health of the Member States, the border guard shall carry out the consultation of the databases referred to in paragraph 2(a) and (b).

[...] The Member State concerned shall without delay transmit its risk assessment and updates to it to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency established by Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 and shall report every six months to the Commission and to the Agency on the application of the checks against the databases carried out on a targeted basis. The Member State concerned may decide to classify the risk assessment or parts thereof.

- 2b. Where a Member State intends to carry out targeted checks against the databases pursuant to paragraph 2a, it shall notify the other Member States, the Agency and the Commission accordingly without delay. The Member State concerned may decide to classify the notification or parts thereof.

In case the Member States, the Agency or the Commission have concerns about the intention, they shall notify the Member State in question of these concerns without delay.

The Member State in question shall take these concerns into account.

- 2c. The Commission shall, before two years after [date to be inserted: date of entry into force], transmit to the the European Parliament and the Council an evaluation of the implementation and consequences of Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 as amended by this Regulation.

2d. With regard to air borders, paragraphs 2a and 2b shall apply for a maximum transitional period of six months from [date to be inserted: date of entry into force].

In exceptional cases, where at a specific airport there are specific infrastructural difficulties requiring a longer period of time for adaptations to allow for the carrying out of systematic checks against the databases without disproportionate impact on the flow of traffic, the six-month transitional period referred to in the first subparagraph may be prolonged for that airport, by a maximum of eighteen months under the procedure specified below.

For that purpose, the Member State shall, at the latest three months before the expiry of the transitional period referred to in the first subparagraph, notify the Commission, the Agency and the other Member States about the specific infrastructural difficulties in a specific airport, the envisaged measures to remedy them and the required period of time for implementation.

Where the specific infrastructural difficulties requiring a longer period for adaptations exist, the Commission, within one month of receipt of such a notification and after consulting the Agency, shall authorise the Member State concerned to prolong the transitional period for that airport and, where relevant, shall set the length of such prolongation.

2e. The checks against the databases referred to in paragraph 2(a) and (b) may be carried out in advance based on passenger information received in accordance with Council Directive 2004/82(EC) or in accordance with other Union or national legislation.

In case these checks are carried out in advance based on such passenger information, a verification shall take place at the border crossing point. This process shall consist of a verification of the received advanced data against the data in the travel document and the verification of the identity and the nationality of the person concerned, as well as the authenticity and the validity of the travel document for crossing the border.

- 2f. By derogation to paragraph 2, the persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law who cross the internal land borders of the Member States for which the verification in accordance with the applicable Schengen evaluation procedures has already been successfully completed, but for which the decision on the lifting of controls on their internal borders pursuant to relevant provisions of relevant Acts of Accession has not yet been taken, may be subject to the checks on exit referred to in that paragraph only on a non-systematic basis, based on a risk assessment.
- (aa) Paragraph 3(a)(i) and (ii) are replaced by the following:
- "(i) Verification of the identity and the nationality of the third country national and of the authenticity and validity of the travel document for crossing the border, including by consulting the relevant databases, in particular:
- (1) the Schengen Information System;
 - (2) the Interpol database on stolen and lost travel documents;
 - (3) national databases containing information on stolen, misappropriated, lost and invalidated travel documents
- For passport and travel documents containing a storage medium, the authenticity of the chip data shall be checked, subject to the availability of valid certificates.
- (ii) verification that the travel document is accompanied, where applicable, by the requisite visa or residence permit."

- (ab) Paragraph 3(a)(vi) is replaced by the following:
vi) verification that the third-country national concerned, his or her means of transport and the objects he or she is transporting are not likely to jeopardise the public policy, internal security, public health or international relations of any of the Member States. Such verification shall include direct consultation of the data and alerts on persons and, where necessary, objects included in the SIS and other relevant Union databases, and the action to be performed, if any, as a result of an alert. This is without prejudice to the consultation of national and Interpol databases.
- (ac) Paragraph 3(g) (i) and (ii) are replaced by the following:
"(i) Verification of the identity and the nationality of the third country national and of the authenticity and validity of the travel document for crossing the border, including by consulting the relevant databases, in particular:
(1) the Schengen Information System;
(2) the Interpol database on stolen and lost travel documents;
(3) national databases containing information on stolen, misappropriated, lost and invalidated travel documents
For passport and travel documents containing a storage medium, the authenticity of the chip data shall be checked, subject to the availability of valid certificates.
- (b) Paragraph 3(g) (iii) is replaced by the following:
"(iii) verification that the third-country national concerned is not considered to be a threat to public policy, internal security or international relations of any of the Member States, including by consulting the Schengen Information System and other relevant Union databases [...]. This is without prejudice to the consultation of national and Interpol databases."¹⁶

¹⁶ This text is aligned with the amended Article 7(2)(b).

- (c) Paragraph 3(h)(iii) is deleted.
- (d) In paragraph 3, the following points are added:

"(j) The checks against the databases referred to in points (a)(i) and (vi) and (g) may be carried out in advance based on passenger information received in accordance with Council Directive 2004/82(EC) or with other Union or national legislation.

In case these checks are carried out in advance based on such passenger information, a verification shall take place at the border crossing point. This process shall consist of a verification of the received advanced data against the data in the travel document and the verification of the identity and the nationality of the person concerned, as well as the authenticity and validity of the travel document for crossing the border.

- (k) Where there is doubt on the authenticity of the travel document or on the identity of the third country national, the checks, where possible, shall include the verification of at least one of the biometric identifiers integrated in the travel documents."

Article 2

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in the Member States in accordance with the Treaties.

Done at Strasbourg,

For the EP

For the Council

The President

The President
